

FROM DESK TO TRENCH



THE MAKING OF A BRITISH SOLDIER

FOREWORD.

WHEN war broke out in August, 1914, the British Army (Regular Establishment, Army Reserve and Territorial Forces) numbered less than 650,000 men. The 100,000 volunteers for whom Lord Kitchener first asked were raised within a few days and these were followed by a continuous stream of fresh recruits. The enlistments of a single day outstripped the enrolment of a year in times of peace, and when in September, 1914, the story of the Mons retreat was received in England, 175,000 men offered themselves in a week. By May, 1915, 1,000,000 men had volunteered; by the end of the year 3,000,000 men had offered themselves for-service; by July, 1917, between 5,000,000 and 5,500,000 men had been raised for the British Army in Great Britain, and about 1,000,000 men had responded to the call of the Mother-country from the Dominions and colonies overseas.

When in January, 1916, compulsory military service was introduced in Great Britain the vast majority of eligible men had already enlisted. But, as the strain of war grew more intense, it was generally felt, that without a universal obligation, it would be difficult to adjudicate fairly between the claims of civil and military necessity, to maintain a steady flow of reinforcements, and to secure that no man should profit by the patriotism of his neighbour. The acceptance of conscription by Great Britain, with whom voluntarism was one of the most deep-rooted traditions, was a pledge no less convincing than the raising of her volunteer armies, that she would let nothing stand in her way of her determination to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion.

The photographs in this book illustrate the training of a British soldier, from the moment when he enters the Recruiting Office, to the time when he takes his place in the firing line. They follow him from the training camp in England to the troop ship, from the troop ship to the training camp in France, and then show him on the march to the trenches. Britain's civilian army, trained and equipped during the last three years, has proved more than a match for the military machine upon which Germany lavished many years of the most elaborate preparation, and, in co-operation with its Allies, it will not relax its efforts until final victory has been inscribed upon its banners.

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Outside the Recruiting Office : recruits waiting their turn.

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At the Recruiting Office.

(1) Recruits taking the oath. (2) Recruits being given their papers.

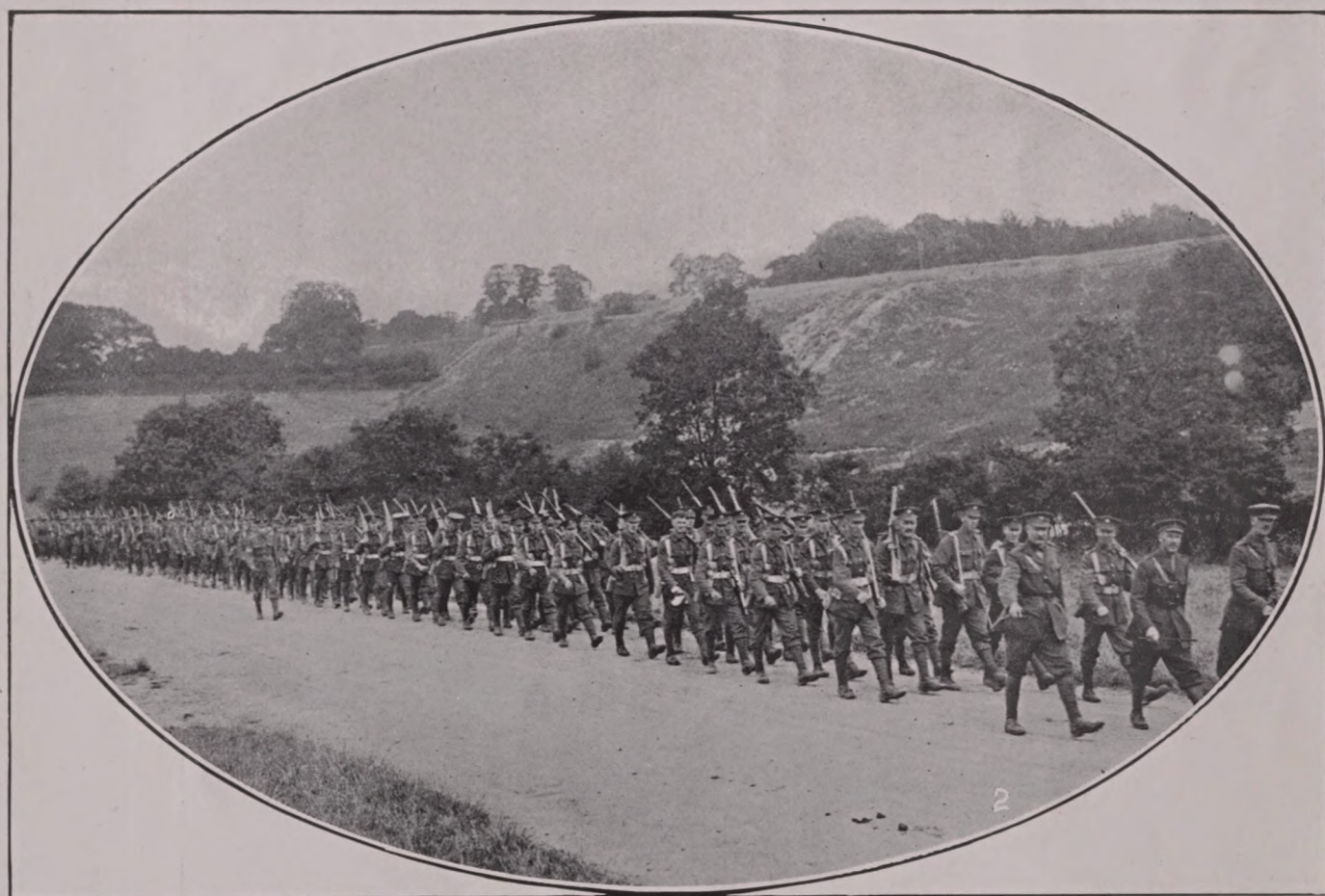


The Medical Examination.

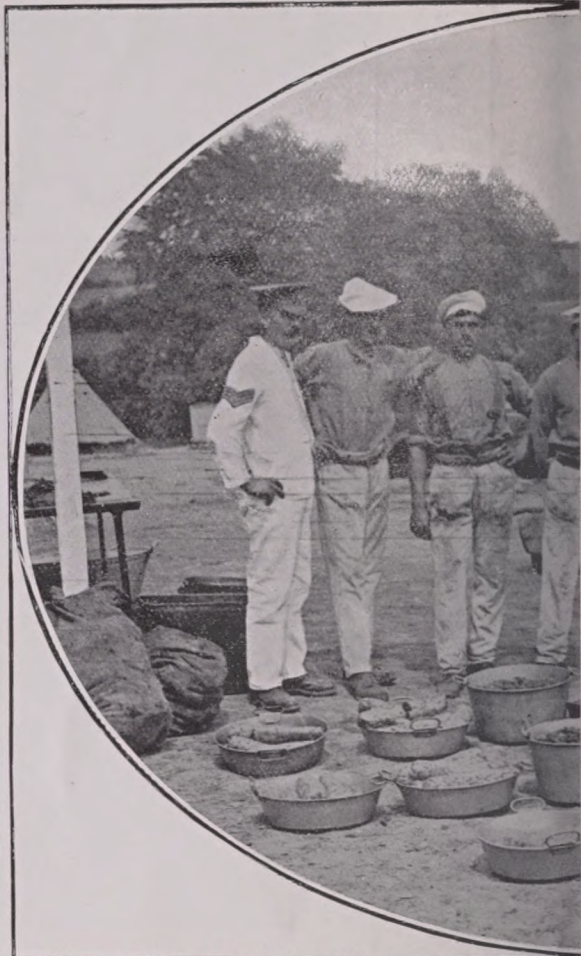
(1) Measuring and weighing recruits. (2) The eyesight test. (3) Testing the lungs.



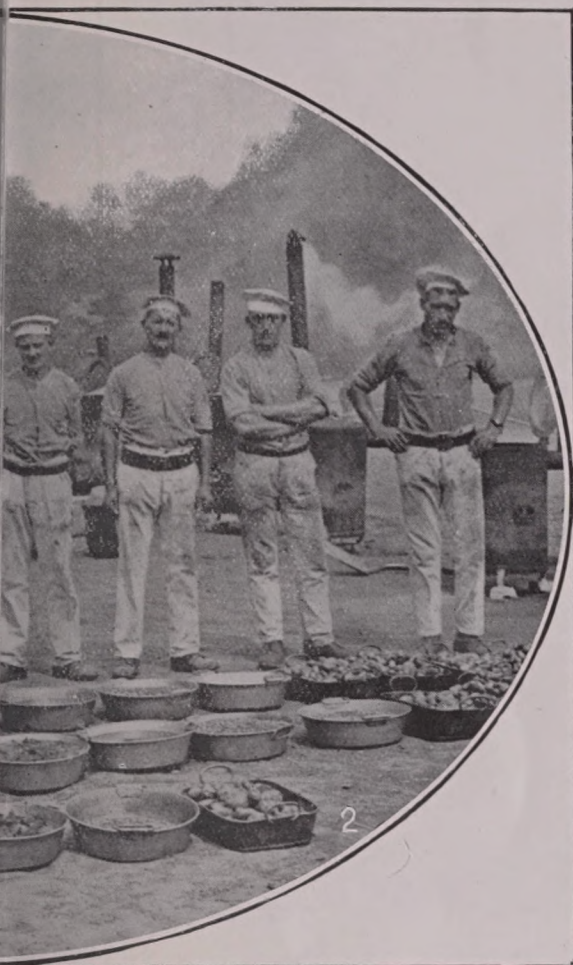
Out of civilian clothes into khaki. (1) Fitting recruits with their uniforms.
(2) Recruits, with their kit, ready to leave for training.



Recruits at a training-camp in England.
(1) Drill on the parade-ground. (2) A route-march.



The domestic side of an English training-camp. (1) Shoemakers at work. (2) Rations
(5) The barber's shop.



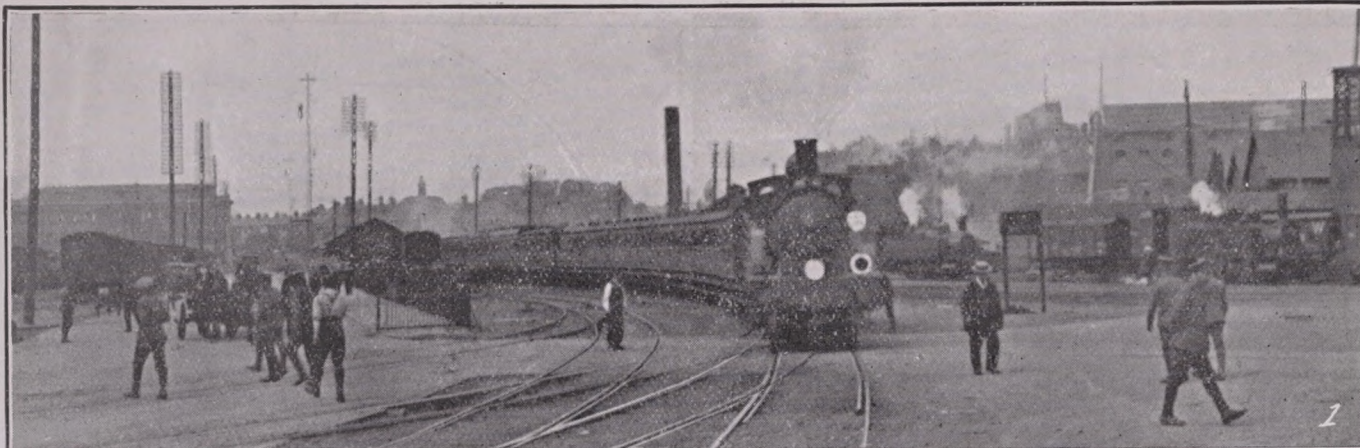
ready for serving. (3) The tailor's shop. (4) "Repairs executed on the premises."
 (5) Letters from home.



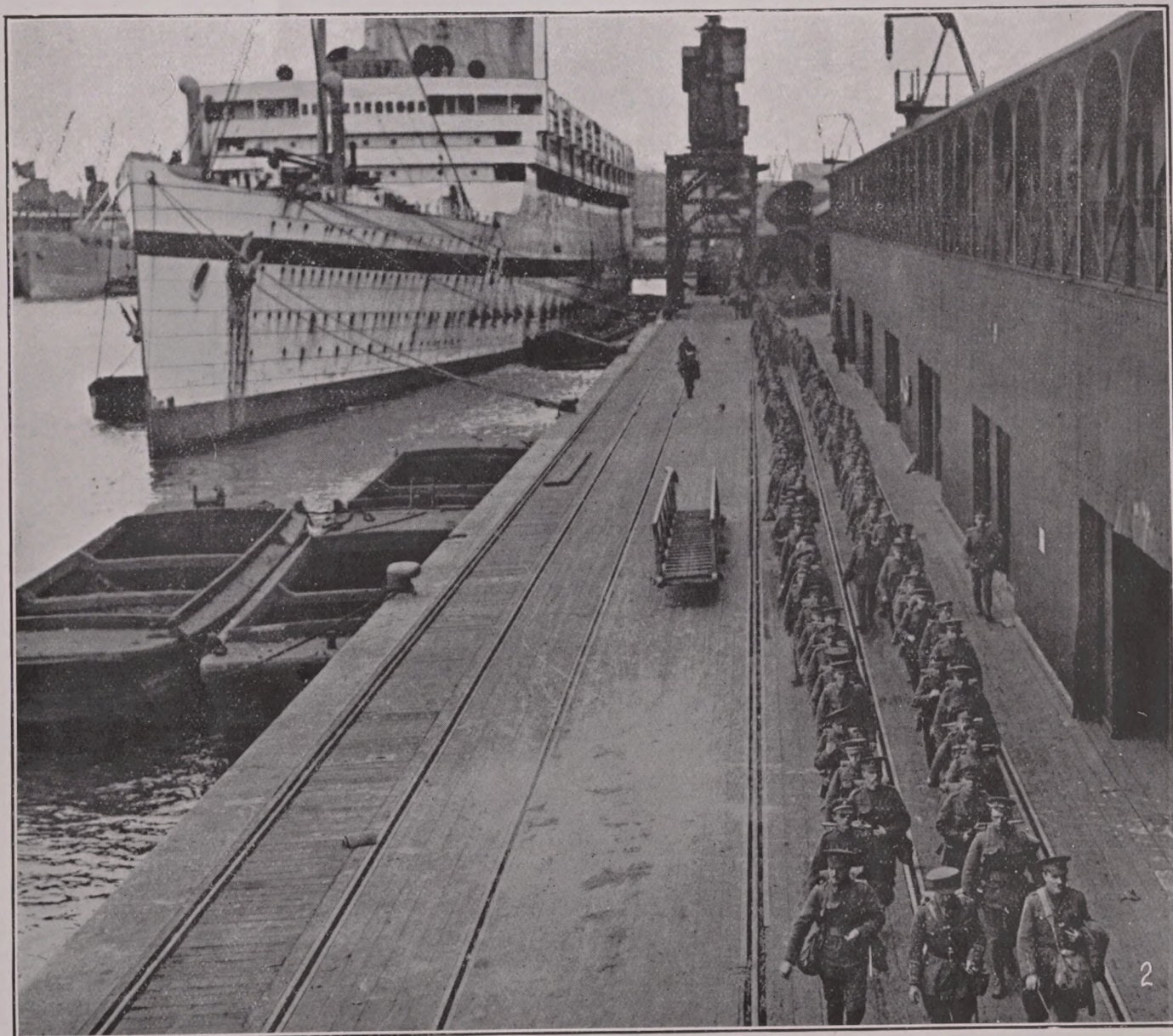
Recruits at a training-camp in England.
 (1) Learning how to bring in a prisoner.
 (2) Instruction in the use of the heliograph.



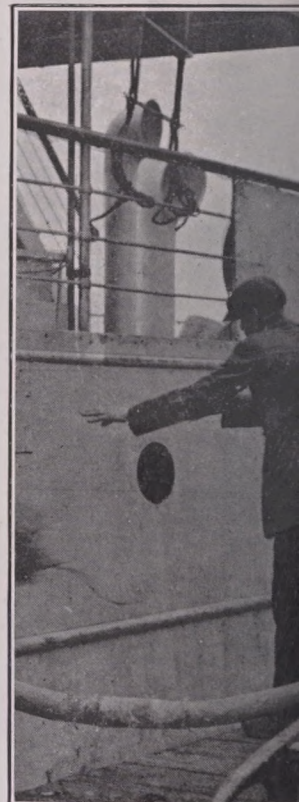
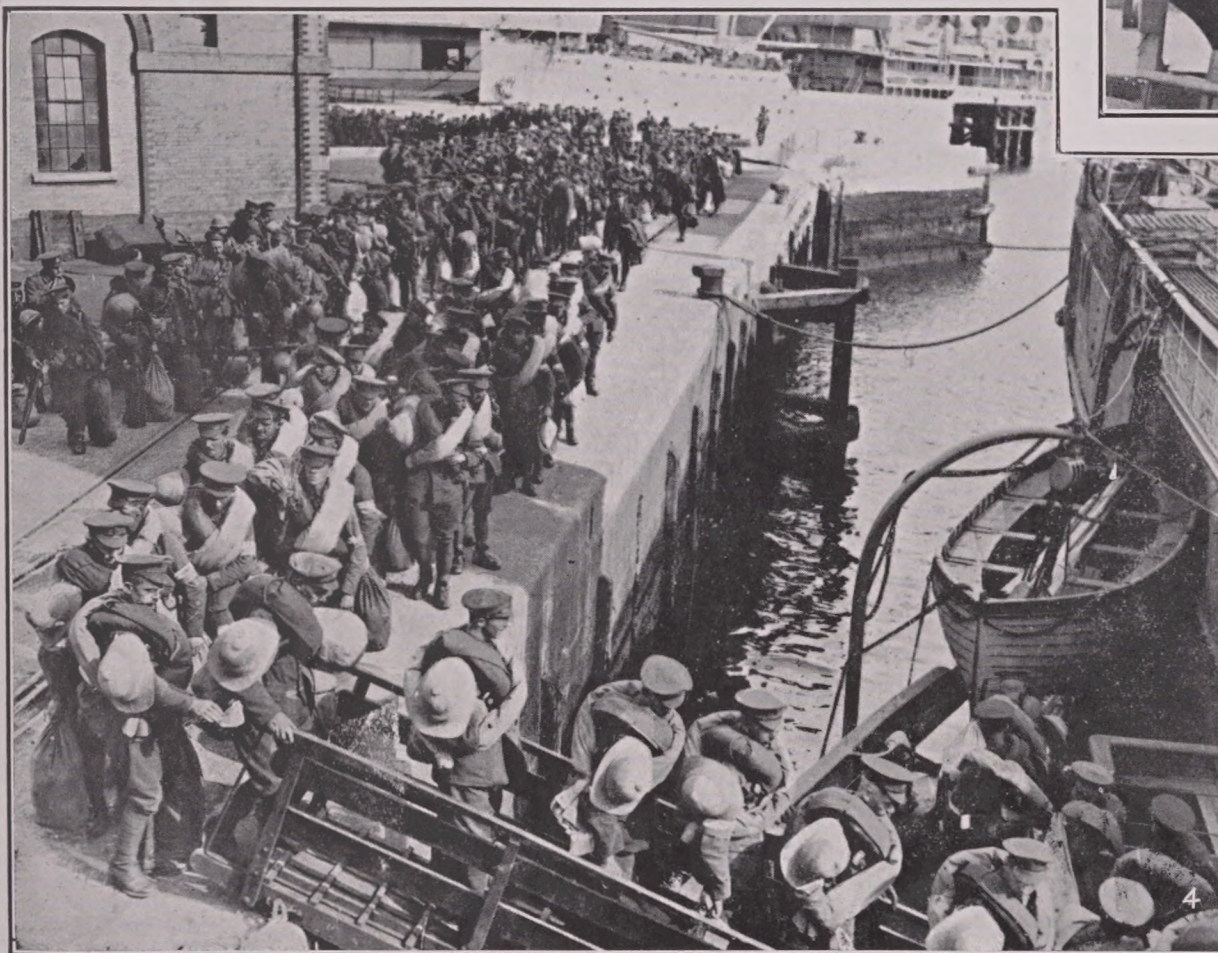
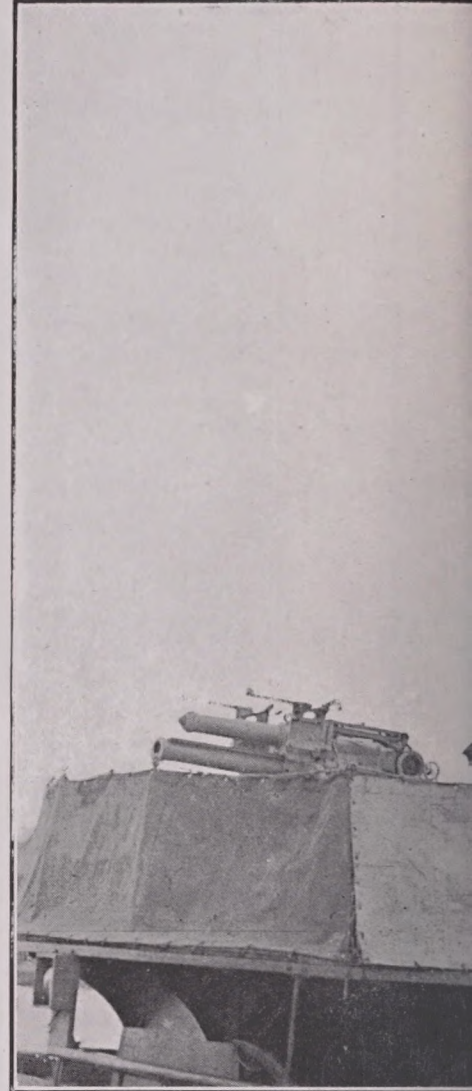
Recruits at a training-camp in England.
Three positions in bomb-throwing practice.



Leaving camp for the front. (1) A troop-train arriving at the docks. (2) Troops detrained and ready for inspection. (3) Roll-call. (4) Troops at the dock, waiting for their boat.



At the docks. (1) Troops waiting for their boat.
(2) Troops marching down the quay.



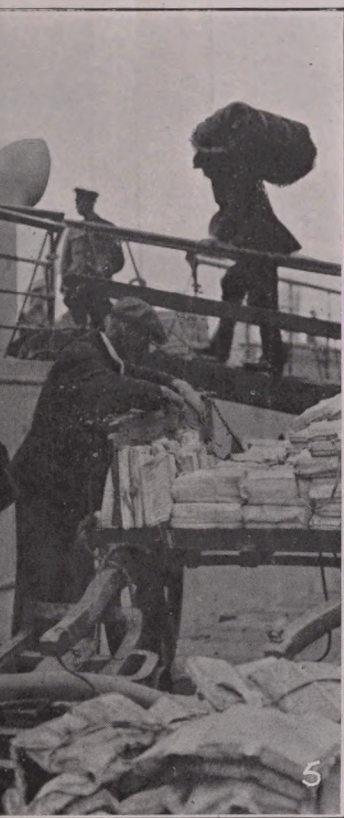
Off to France. (1) Troops, lined up on the quay, waiting to embark. (4) Troops embarking. (5) Throwing life-belts on board.



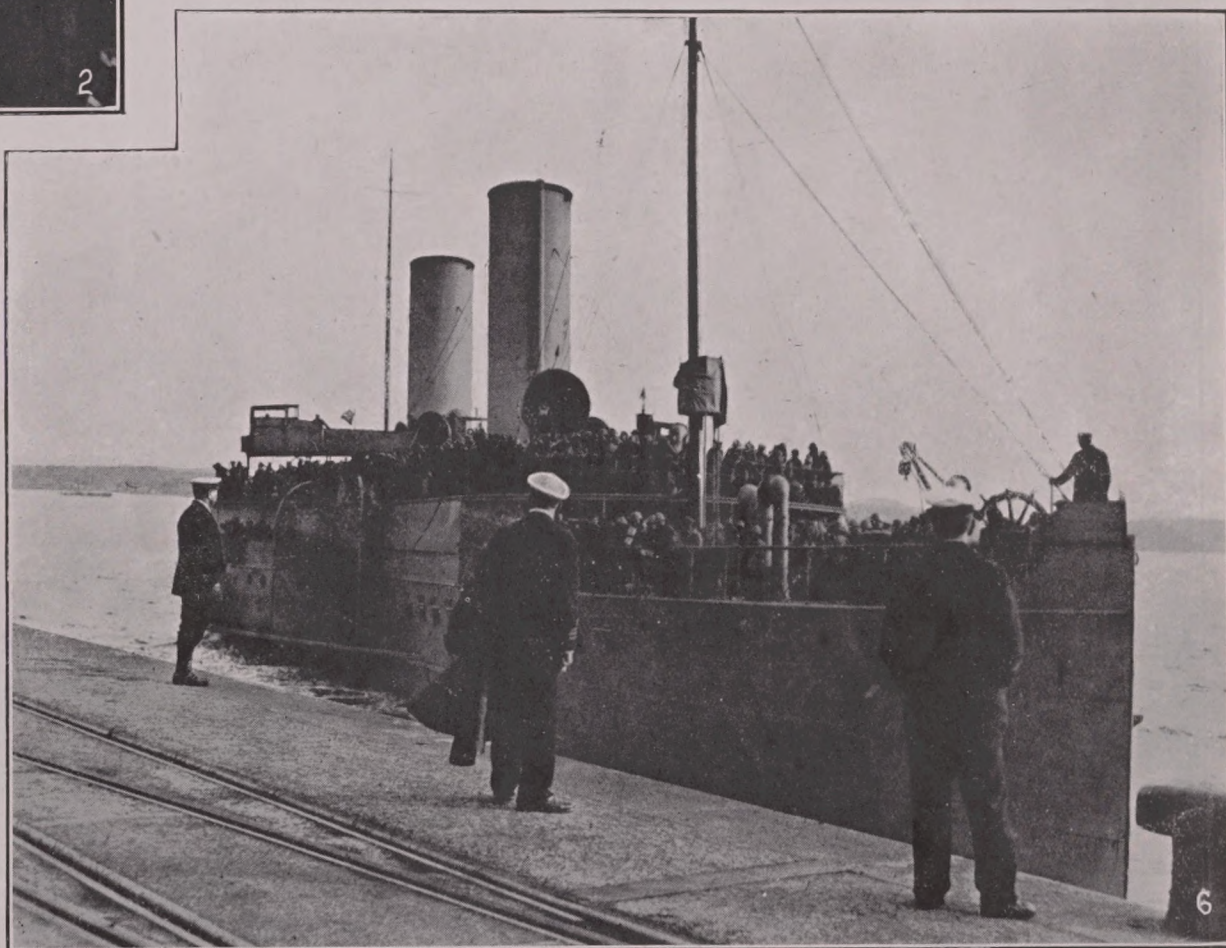
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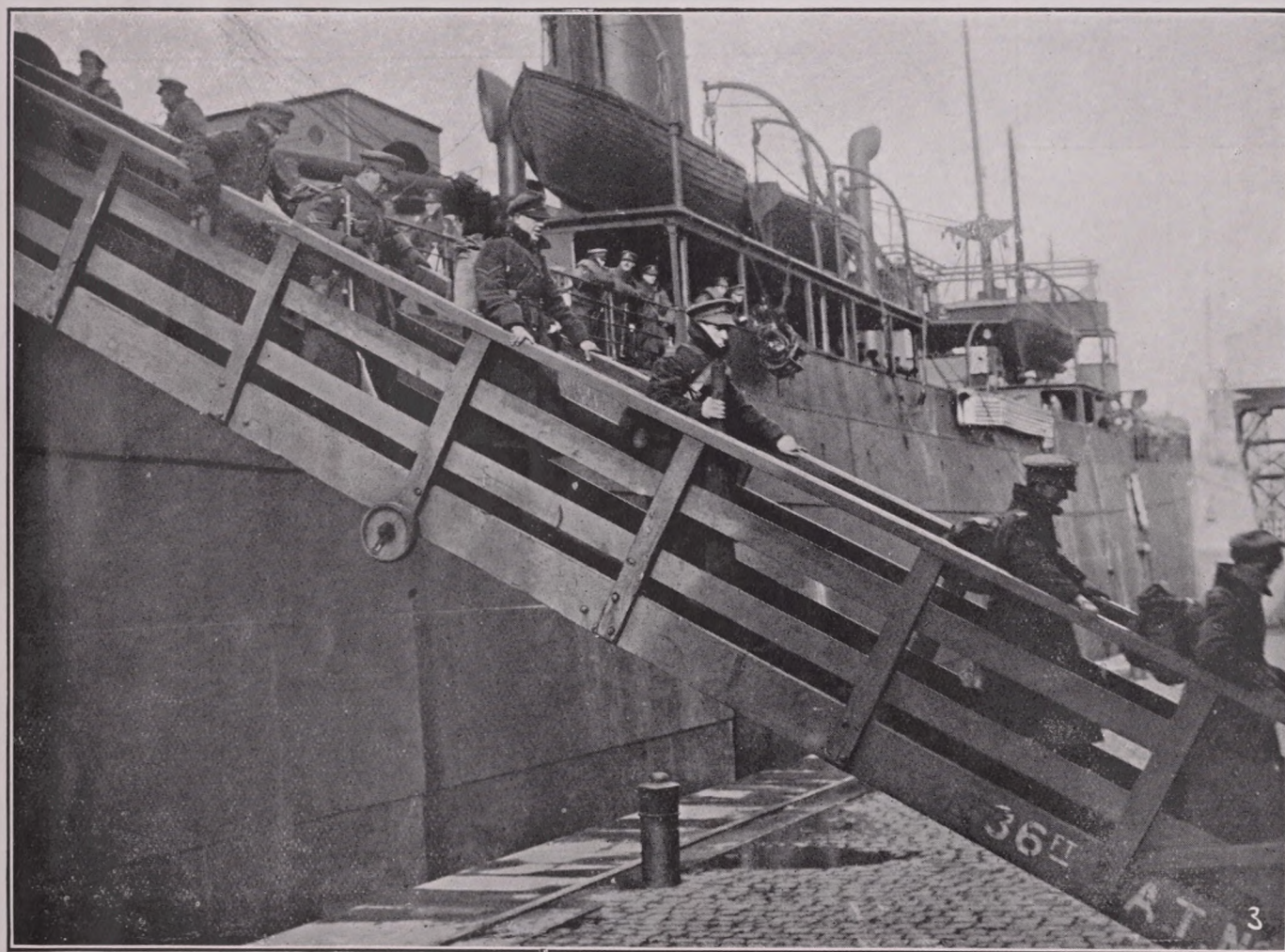


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(2) On board a troop-ship. (3) Sliding a life-boat on board.
(6) The troop-ship leaving the quay.



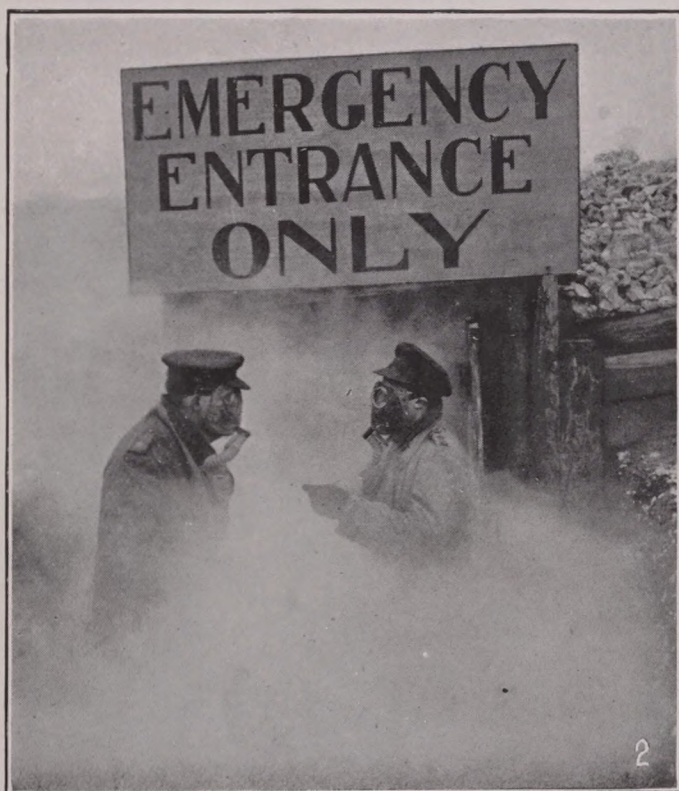
Troops arriving in France.
 (1 & 2) Recruits on the troop-ship, waiting to disembark. (3) Troops disembarking.



British Troops arriving in France.
 (1) Waiting on the quay. (2) Roll-call. (3) Recruits marching off to camp.



Scenes in a training-camp in France. (1) Recruits arriving in camp.
(2) Musketry-drill on the parade ground. (3) Athletic exercises.



Gas-drill at a training-camp in France. (1) Troops equipped with their gas-masks.
 (2) The entrance to the gas-chamber.
 (3) Troops coming out of the lachrymatory gas-chamber.



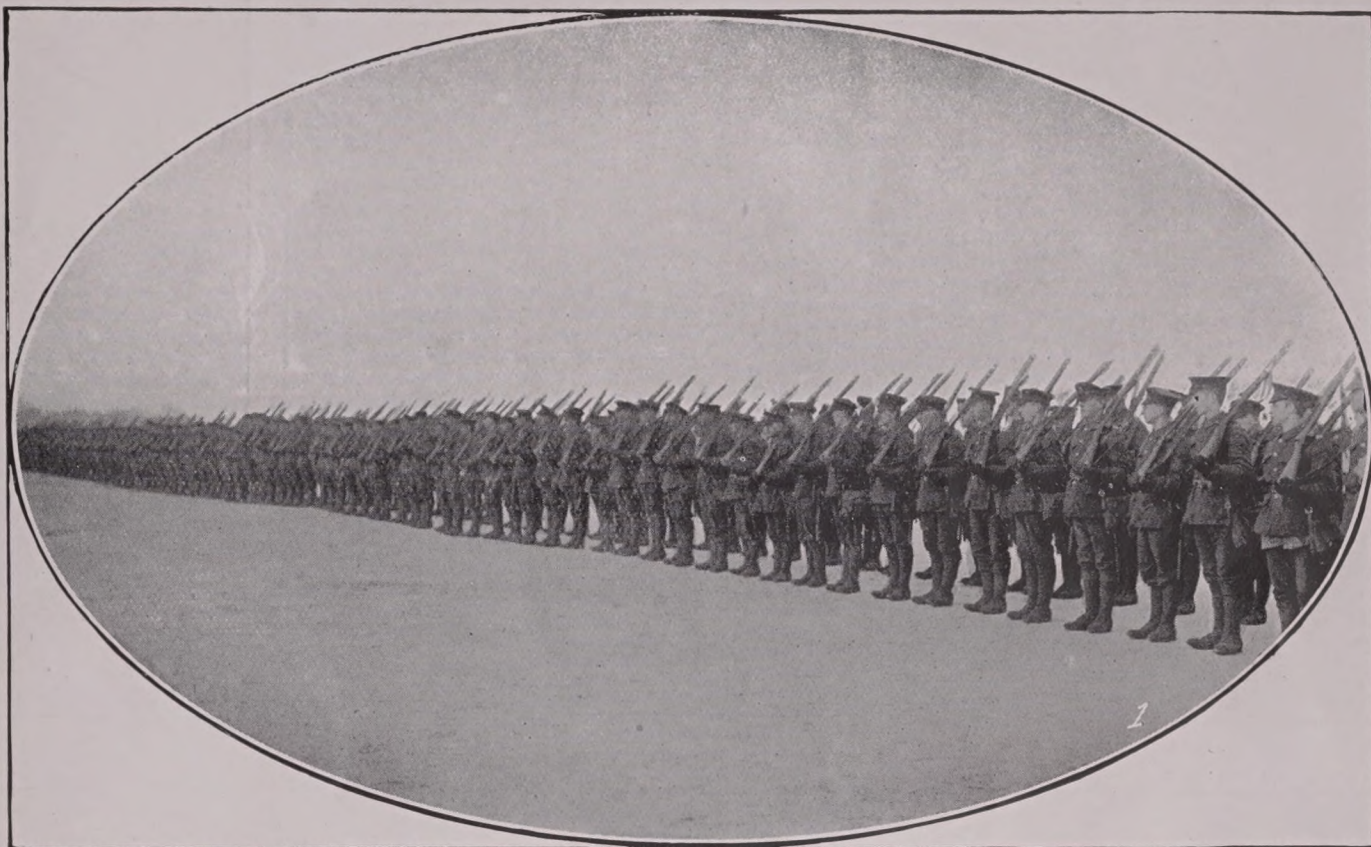
Scenes in a training-camp in France : physical exercise on the parade ground.



Scenes in a training-camp in France : three positions in bayonet practice.



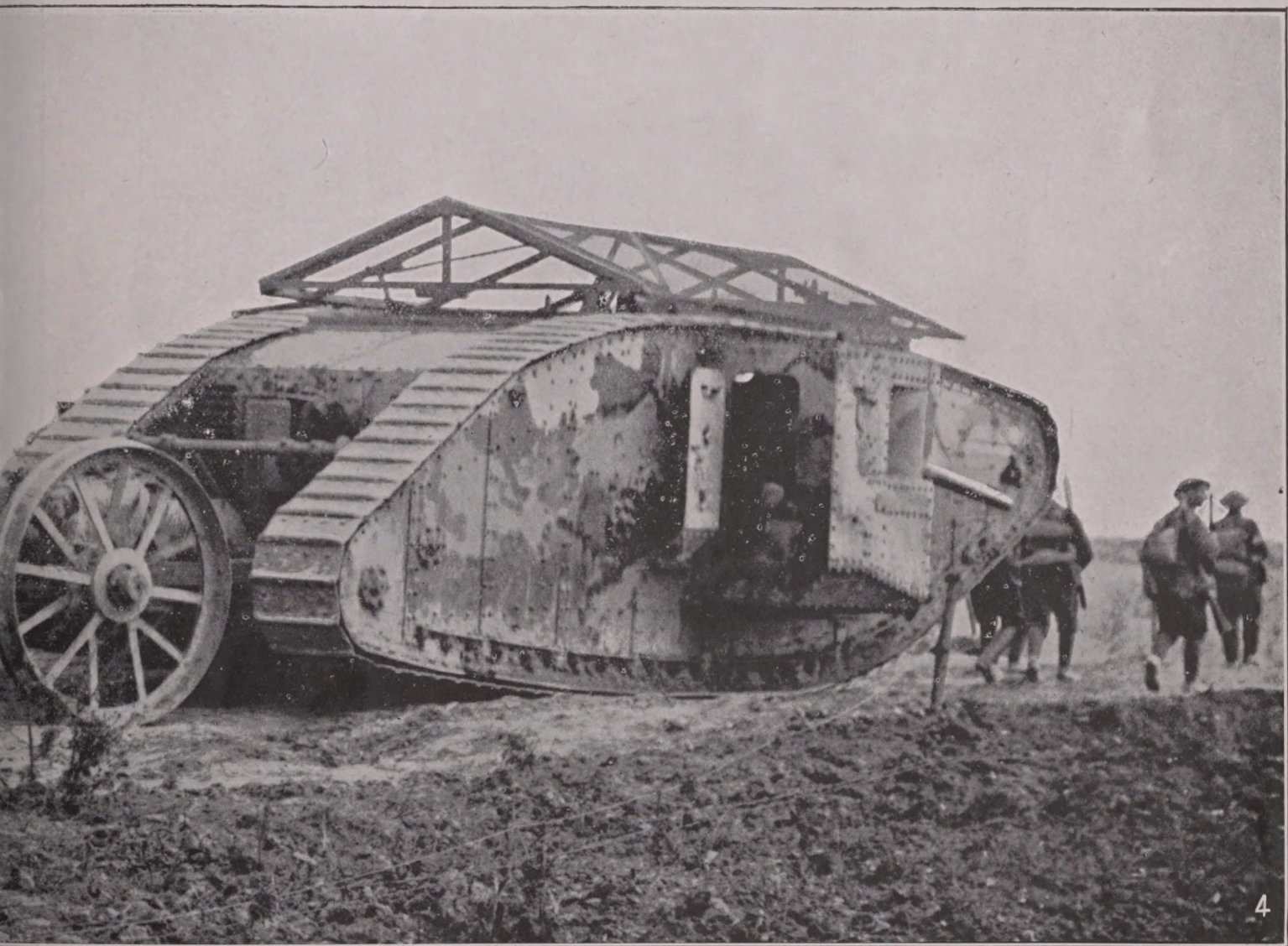
Scenes in a training-camp in France.
(1) Sandbag filling. (2) Target instruction.



Ready to leave for the trenches. (1) The last drill in the the training-camp.
(2) Troops at inspection before their departure.



Their training over, the finished recruits are eager to meet the enemy
in the fourth photograph can be seen one c



The first three pictures show British troops on their way to the trenches, and earlier types of the famous "tanks."



"Are we down-hearted? NO!"
British troops in a trench in France.



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